Farmer Organizations and Modernizing Extension and Advisory Services:

A Framework and Reflection on Cases from Sub-Saharan Africa

By R. James Bingen and Brent M. Simpson

MEAS Discussion Paper 5

March 2015

FARMER ORGANIZATIONS AND MODERNIZING EXTENSION AND ADVISORY SERVICES:

A FRAMEWORK AND REFLECTION ON CASES FROM SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

MEAS Discussion Paper Series on Good Practices and Best Fit Approaches in Extension and Advisory Service Provision

March 2015

R. James Bingen, Professor Emeritus, Department of Community Sustainability, Michigan State University

Brent M. Simpson, Associate Prof., Department of Agricultural, Food and Resource Economics, Michigan State University, and Senior Agricultural Officer, United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization.

Technical editing by Leslie Johnson.
Production by Andrea Bohn.

This discussion paper was produced as part of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) project Modernizing Extension and Advisory Services (MEAS) *www.meas-extension.org*.

Leader with Associates Cooperative Agreement No. AID-OAA-L-10-00003.

The report was made possible by the generous support of the American people through USAID. The contents are the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the U.S. government.

Note from the Editors

The Modernizing Extension and Advisory Services (MEAS) discussion paper series is designed to further the comparative analysis of and learning from international extension efforts. The papers contain a review of extension and advisory services best practices drawn from the global body of experience in successfully reaching resource-limited farmers. The papers identify the underlying principles associated with high levels of success in reaching women and men farmers and how, in differing contexts, these core principles have been successfully adapted to fit local conditions in establishing productive, profitable and sustainable relationships with individual producers, producer groups, the private sector, and associated research and education institutions.

The series includes papers on a wide range of topics, such as the realities of pluralistic extension provisioning, sustainable financing, the role of farmer organizations, linking farmers to markets, the importance of gender, use of information and communication technologies, and climate change adaptation. The papers target policymakers, donor agency and project staff members, researchers, teachers and international development practitioners. All papers are available for download from the MEAS project website, www.meas-extension.org.

The editors,

Brent M. Simpson, Michigan State University
Paul McNamara, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Contents

Introduction

The future success of demand-driven, market-oriented rural advisory services rests in large part on the formation and capacities of farmer groups. A majority of development success stories are the direct result of or dependent on collective action. However, the multifaceted role of farmer organizations in extension efforts is not well understood. In many contexts, the story of local rural development efforts is a tale of failed farmer groups. The majority of those groups, created for various purposes by national agencies or development organizations, commonly lacked essential elements that could have assured their longevity. Improving our understanding of the role of farmer organizations in development outcomes is clearly critical to identifying options and strategies for promoting successful rural advisory services (RAS).

This paper rests on two working assumptions. First, working with community-based farmer groups represents an essential means for strengthening farmer capacity to be involved in a wide range of agricultural and rural development activities, to participate in markets and to be involved in policy formation. Second, different types of investment in RAS influence the types of services available to farmer groups and, consequently, groups' collective capacity to access and make effective demands on RAS.[1]

Following a brief review of several regulatory, organizational and policy conditions that influence all types of farmer organizations, we offer a brief summary of general farm types and their relationships with farmer groups. This is followed by our typology of RAS investment types, useful for considering issues related to modernizing extension and advisory services in working with farmer organizations in sub-Saharan Africa.

Regulatory and Organizational Conditions

Constitutional and regulatory conditions. Constitutional rights and regulatory processes that protect and facilitate freedom of organization and speech must be present if producer groups are to play a legitimate public role. Producers must have the legal right to assemble and take actions through their independent groups. This includes the right to contradict and to make demands upon government policymakers. Political leaders and administrative officials must recognize and accept the legitimacy of producers' demands for governmental accountability. More specifically, government regulations concerning the legal status or juridical standing of producer groups and matters such as registration significantly influence the development and role of producer groups in society. Regulatory and procedural stipulations to establish groups may be extremely burdensome, especially for less educated producers. The Uganda Cooperative Alliance, among others, assists member organizations to overcome national registration hurdles.

[1] For early discussions of farmer groups and rural development, see 1979 World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (WCARRD); Peter Oakley, 1990, "Rural Organizations and People's Participation: A Review of a Decade's Progress for Cooperatives and Rural Workers Organizations." In Rural Organizations and Peoples Participation: A Review of a Decades Progress for Cooperatives and *Rural Workers Organizations* (Reading, U.K.: University of Reading Agricultural Extension and Rural Development Department). Also see , Marie-Hélène Collion and Pierre Rondot, 1998, "Partnerships between Agricultural Services Institutions and Producers' Organizations: Myth or Reality?" In *Partnerships between Agricultural Services Institutions and Producers' Organizations: Myth or Reality?* (London: Overseas Development Institute).

Origins. Groups established as part of government programs or through external development efforts frequently confront difficulties in gaining smallholder confidence and their active involvement.[2] In contrast, groups that emerge from the shared interests of producers often face the need to adhere to sometimes onerous governmental regulations and fees. Specialized marketing collectives or other groups that coalesce around identified economic interests commonly fall in the latter category.

Those groups that emerge organically often trace their origins to one or more local individuals or to some catalytic event. Long-term resident expatriates or returned villagers (immigrant laborers, retired school teachers and civil servants) frequently provide the initial organizational leadership. In such instances, the transition from dependence on inspired individuals to a broader leadership base often challenges such groups.

Levels of organization. A group's membership focus also influences the role that a group may play in extension and advisory services.

National or sub-national farmer groups are based on constituent or membership units that may be found throughout a country or in areas or regions within a country. Organizational decision-making is usually centralized or takes place "at the top." Constituent units, sometimes at several levels, participate in various ways in the decision-making process, but the defining feature of these units lies in carrying out decisions made or in the operational space created by a national- or regional-level body. Such groups are frequently organized around a single agricultural product. Commodity-based farmer unions, such as the cotton, dairy or tobacco farmer unions found in western, eastern and southern Africa, are a common example of this type of organization. Such groups can be instrumental in negotiating with national governmental agencies on behalf of members, who commonly would not otherwise have access to national decision makers.

Federated farmers' groups differ from national-level farmer groups primarily in the nature of the relationship between the constituent units and a main or federal decision-making body. This type of group may operate primarily on a national level, and its constituent units may be found throughout a country. Such groups often comprise member groups associated around a variety of commodities or concerns. Within the federated farmers' groups, however, the constituent units and federating body agree to a defined division of responsibility for shared and separate operational and policy decisions. In other words, the federated group operates *both through and with* its constituent units. The *Association des Organisations Professionnelles Paysannes* in Mali, the Uganda National Farmers Federation and the Farmers' Union of Malawi are examples. Such organizations often supply generalized services common to the needs of member units, and/or act as the entry point for external investments targeting a subsection of the membership or support to the overall structure in addressing larger policy issues.

Local-level farmer groups, the most common and diverse type of farmer organization, operate at a level where members have face-to-face relationships and are likely to have multiple connections through religious, kinship, community trade, and other economic and social

[2] The legacy of abuse of trust, once established, as in the case of government-sponsored smallholder cooperative programs of the 1980s, continues to exert influence.

relations. As simple organizations not associated with larger federated bodies, these groups represent autonomous decision-making units, organized around and taking action on members' most immediate needs. Governmental programs and donor-financed projects typically target the creation and support to these types of groups independently or in conjunction with support to higher level coordinating bodies.

Decentralized Government

Targeted decentralized governmental programs attempt to offer farmer groups opportunities for access to government services and, less commonly, for involvement in operational decision-making and prioritization.[3] Nevertheless, the ability of farmer groups to make effective demands for services may be limited by either their perceived dependency on the governmental offices that provide services or by an absence of governmental recognition of the value and services of farmer organizations. In their interactions with governmental structures, the effectiveness of farmer groups in serving member needs depends heavily on the capacity to discern various organizational roles and capacities, challenged by complex and overlapping governmental structures and ephemeral donor-supported initiatives.

Decentralized public agencies may also be more responsive to the demands of groups that represent larger, better organized and/or more highly capitalized farm enterprises, as well as those most closely aligned with centrally determined policies. An old story, the decentralization of government services does not automatically increase opportunities for subsistence-oriented, mixed-farming groups. Decentralized administration of centrally planned national programs ”serving” smallholder producers may, in fact, represent a closed door for local farmer groups that seek a voice in determining program content and resource allocation. Unless intentionally structured otherwise, through smallholder advisory boards or other entities using transparent decision-making processes, governmental agencies and agents tend to establish safe relationships with like-minded farmers, and these tend to be the more educated, politically connected and highly capitalized farmers.

Organizational Concerns

Problem identification. Viable farmer groups tend to have evolved ways to discuss issues of organizational and operational concern on a regular basis. This involves the capacity to become a learning organization with the ability to promote continuing self-refection and adaptation. Such capacities are essential for the long-term viability of collective efforts within the context of evolving markets and government institutions and programs, as well as the ability to respond to the shifting needs of their own growth and development (cf. Cook and Burress, 2009).

External interests in creating or effectively using farmer organizations to replace or substitute for weak, failed or absent public RAS, if not well-structured, runs the risk of contributing to a group's loss of identity or responsiveness to member needs and interests. Contexts exist in which farmers can and must address some or all of their own RAS needs if they are to realize the benefits of collective action. This is particularly true for market-oriented organizations facing

[3] Examples include the area- and district-level stakeholder platforms in Malawi and the various multistakeholder platforms established through World Bank project support in Kenya and Uganda, among others.

challenges with postharvest value addition and quality maintenance and/or profitable performance of highly valued assets, in which public RAS services often have expertise. In addition to financial resources, one of the values of external assistance is the access to experiences and knowledge of opportunities that external organizations have that are above and beyond those commonly held by local groups. Yet as internally determined development objectives are added to or replaced by the goals of outsiders, or conditionalities placed on the access to external support, groups can fail to establish a clear vision of their own or can lose touch with such a vision. Whether acknowledged or not, the vast majority of donor-funded projects and government interventions involving local-level farmer organizations contribute to this risk, as reflected in the speed, extent and forcefulness of externally induced change. Most cynically, local groups simply become a means to an end in others' agenda. In sum, the way in which groups are assisted in meeting some or all of their RAS needs (when determined by outsiders) represents a major risk to their long-term survival. In this regard, and depending on their level of political awareness and independence, higher order, federated and national farmer organizations may be better able to maintain their identity and defend their interests.

Organization and membership. Traditions and past experiences of working together influence the ways in which producers develop the trust and relationships essential for building and sustaining effective and viable groups. Important organizational issues include:

- Organizational structure, including administrative and management procedures as well as a process for reviewing, revising and adapting procedures to fit changing needs.
- Conditions and meaning of membership, including requirements and accountability among members and leaders, and the benefits expected from membership.
- The need to generate capital from earnings through some type of member contribution, share capital, service fees or joint credit.

Homogeneity of membership is consistently identified as one element of farmer organization success. Equally true, and especially so with local-level organizations attempting to collectively enter markets for the first time, a certain degree of positive heterogeneity is also found. Individuals with greater assets that are yet still insufficient to achieve minimum delivery volumes or capital to acquire value-added processing equipment can act as a hub around which other producers, with lesser yet vital resources, can organize. In such instances, achieving an acceptable degree of reciprocity and equality in meeting differing needs and distributing benefits can become a continuing struggle within groups. If not handled well, external assistance efforts interested in meeting social development objectives through broadening group heterogeneity to include the poor, especially the poorest of the poor, can expose collective enterprises to risk of collapse. In these cases, risk resides in the inherent differences in capacities and resources among members.

*Education and literacy***.** Literacy and numeracy skills are the backbone of viable farmer groups. Inadequate levels of education affect all aspects of a group's viability, including administrative procedures, financial management, and ability for political lobbying and bargaining (see Box 1).

Box 1: The Foundation of Rural Development - Village Associations in the Office du la Haute Vallée du Niger (OHVN), Mali

Basic literacy skills are part of the foundation upon which local capacity-building development efforts rest. Mali was once a leader in promoting functional literacy training for farm families (Dumont, 1973; Belloncle, 1979). Based on these investments in literacy training, a Malian farmers' movement emerged slowly but deliberately over a period of almost 20 years. Those who introduced the village functional literacy programs in the late 1960s could scarcely imagine that literacy and numeracy skills would translate into political and economic power.

Building on earlier efforts and later programs of the governmental Direction Nationale de l'Alphabétisation Fonctionnelle et de la Linguistique Appliquée (DNAFLA), villagers were offered and became attracted to the opportunity of literacy and numeracy training. This training was designed to enhance the possibilities for applying those skills directly in improving cotton marketing and the pursuit of other income-generating activities.

In 1974, villages led by those in functional literacy programs in the major cotton production area of Mali protested against dishonest cotton grading and weighing practices. The villages demanded that the Compagnie Malienne pour le Developpement des Textiles (CMDT) relinquish control of those operations to designated village groups. Literacy skills were the sine qua non for the emergence of Mali's first farmers' union, the Syndicat des Producteurs du Coton et des Cultures Vivrières (SYCOV). If literate farmers had not been coming together over a period of years to discuss production and marketing problems, SYCOV might never have seen the light of day.

As an outgrowth of the significant investments in functional literacy programs, in the early 1990s, both national groups and international agencies sought to change Malian government policy regarding the supply, distribution and credit for cotton inputs (fertilizer, pesticides, sprayers, etc.) to small-scale growers. Under the second phase of the USAID-funded Development of Haute Vallée du Niger project, in 1992 the Cooperative League USA (CLUSA) was engaged to assist in forming Associations Villageoises (AVs) that would help to facilitate the transfer of responsibilities for local development to producer associations under the new national policy reforms (Bingen and Simpson, 1997).

The CLUSA engagement model was built around the posting of field agents in rural areas to work with clusters of villages, beginning with functional literacy training. Other critical components of the initiative included identification of commercial activities, development of a business plan and management training for AV leadership (Bingen, 1994). USAID also established a loan guarantee with the Banque Nationale de Développement Agricole (BNDA) that provided security for the loans to groups that had been assisted by CLUSA in developing their business plans. USAID's support for functional literacy and AV formation efforts had been on going for several years, but business development training and opening of a line for smallholder group credit were new. In fact, the formal banking system had never before provided annual production credit to smallholder farmers in rain-fed production systems. It was unheard of, but it succeeded.

Over time, the efforts of the CLUSA program and subsequent efforts led to the establishment of more than 80 AVs. These later merged into 13 secondary associations (Groupement d'Intérêt Economique, GIEs) and subsequently, in 2002/3, into a regional apex body, the Union des GIE de l'Union de la Haute Vallée du Niger et Associés (UGOA), representing more than 4,000 farmers. The credit rating of the UGOA AVs with the BNDA was so good that commercial banks began to complete for the UGOA loan portfolio. It was a good business opportunity, built entirely of smallholder farmers. Success of this program did not go unnoticed. In the neighboring and much larger rural development zone of the

CMDT, AVs were also created and some functional literacy training provided. Attention, however, was not given to ensuring that literacy skills were directed toward market-focused application in parallel business development training and support. The difference in outcomes in the two approaches was striking. A review of the CLUSA program impacts in 2003 found that, whereas the UGOA had secured and repaid (at nearly 100 percent) over 600 million FCFA in loans, the AVs in the CMDT zone defaulted on over 900 million FCFA out of their total of 13 billion in loans (Bingen, 2003).

Despite these impressive successes, by 2007 decline in literacy skills exposed the Achilles' heel of functional literacy. Despite the success of the functional literacy programs, donor interest declined and the governmental investments in primary education never filled the gap. As a result, yet another generation of rural youth lacked basic literacy skills. One review of cotton farmer association capacities found that, by 2007, many of these original AVs had become dysfunctional (Simpson and Dembélé, 2007). Core members of the leadership teams had passed away, moved on or assumed positions in larger associations. Newly formed groups lacked access to business plan training and banking support. Groups still met and marketed their cotton, but fewer were involved in independently securing their own credit and inputs and managing collective commercial enterprises.

Of the many lessons that this experience offers, five are critical to RAS efforts:

- For smallholder producers to become important market participants, the formation of groups was essential but not sufficient.
- Basic literacy skills were required for farmer groups to participate in fully commercialized, market-oriented agriculture and policy dialogue.
- To successfully engage in commercial enterprises, farmers' groups needed to acquire business skills and organization management capacities.
- Access to credit and establishing trust with lending institutions through credit repayment was the final key to securing true economic independence.
- Existence of a sustained source of operational support was needed to ensure sustainability; even successful groups are vulnerable to decline as group membership changes and needs evolve, and new groups will absolutely need assistance.

All except the last were assured under the CLUSA program, although important efforts were made there as well. At the end of the project cycle, former CLUSA field agents were assisted in establishing four domestic non-profit organizations.1 These organizations generally and, in the case of the Haute Vallée du Niger development of the GIEs and UGOA structure, INAGEF, received core operating support from international donors to develop their capacity to provide training and advisory services for farmer enterprises and community organizations in the areas of democratic governance, their legal rights and responsibilities; economic growth; policy advocacy; youth' and health concerns. The growing nucleus of AVs formed through the direct assistance of the CLUSA initiative and the four organizations established prior to the programs' closure served as the core of rural development activities in large parts of rural Mali over a 20-year period and continue to provide benefits.

Leadership and management. The initiative, industry and enthusiasm of key individuals are critical to the success of any group. Past experiences influence a leader's role perceptions as well as opportunities for access to position and power, including the ability to draw upon previous political and institutional commitments.

All groups depend on procedures and operations that should quickly become routine. Transparency or openness in decision-making is important and, in the long run, essential if the group is to be successful. Viable organizations depend on some form of collective leadership and participatory management. If groups are to grow and develop, their structure and leadership forms will also need to evolve as the size of the group and the nature of its external relations change.

Business and financial management. The absence of internal financial management and record keeping may represent the most acute threat to the long-run viability of market-oriented groups. The acquisition of accounting and financial management skills requires continuous effort and attention. The accumulation of trust in managing financial transactions is gradual but critical in creating member willingness to sustain and increase commitment to group activities. Through either procedures or the selection of trusted individuals to manage group accounts, groups have found effective ways of managing common funds.

Box 2. A common feature in the economic interest groups that emerged out of the Farmer Field School experience in Ghana was the selection of women as the keepers of group finances. Women were perceived as not being susceptible to the temptations of running away with group savings, which had plagued many of the groups in their prior experiences with collective economic efforts (Simpson, 2001).

Farm Types

In assessing the role of producer groups in meeting RAS needs, it is useful to consider three types of groups based on general farm type and the dominant economic orientation of the member farm enterprises.

Commercial groups. The members of this type of group tend to operate largely commercial farm enterprises and rely on the production and marketing of a principal cash crop or export commodity such as maize, coffee, tea or cotton as the predominant source of farm income. The members' farm enterprises are relatively highly capitalized, and they depend on high levels of fixed and liquid assets to assure their productivity. When groups are composed largely of producers who represent this farm type, the member relationships can be seen as contractual in nature because the group represents a collective opportunity for each member to protect shared commercial self-interests. Many export crop cooperatives fall into this category, as do those organized around highly valued assets such as livestock.

Mixed-farming groups. This type of group tends to be built around the protection of members' interests in one cash crop. The joint purchase of inputs and/or marketing of produce and access to credit are common *raison d'être* for these groups. In contrast to the largely commercial groups, members tend to operate smaller-scale, diversified farmsteads that are less highly capitalized. In addition, members of this type of group depend less heavily on marketing a single commodity as the sole source of farm income. A wide range of groups engaged in various types of contractual production and marketing programs, including cooperatives, are commonly found in this category.

Subsistence-oriented, mixed-farming groups. A wide variety of self-help or mutual labor associations illustrate this type of group. These groups are usually village- or community-based, and they are built commonly around customary principles or ideas of promoting and protecting individual and collective well-being. Members operate farm enterprises that are characterized by very low levels of capitalization, and they do not rely on cash-crop production as a principal source of farm income. Non-tradable commodities tend to dominate their production systems. Labor and land may be the primary and often only assets. Historically, nonprofit organizations and government agencies have tended to be involved in establishing and working with this kind of group. Their long-term viability is often tied to the identification of clear incentives for forming and remaining active in a group -- something that generates tangible benefits but can only be achieved collectively.

The general typology above offers a means of understanding the character and motivations for involvement of various types of producer groups in RAS. Producer groups whose members' enterprises are highly capitalized and who produce for a highly competitive market where quality standards and delivery compliance are important features are usually interested in seeking ways to be involved in market development and/or refining or gaining access to new technology. The profitability of the members' enterprises depends largely on assured access to input and output markets and the use of the most highly productive and cost-cutting technologies. Similarly, these largely commercial-based groups will not only be more aware of how policy changes affect their role in marketing and access to new technology, but they will tend to have the capacity to make demands and take action to protect their interests. Consequently, groups with highly commercialized interests tend to attract greater attention by government leaders in policy formulation and programmatic decisions.

As the level of capitalization and the degree of dependence on the market among members decline, producer groups tend to take a more limited, discrete and functional role in marketing and technology exchange. The activities in which groups become involved tend to represent those areas in which members readily recognize their most immediate and concrete interests. For example, groups made up of largely mixed-farming enterprises that rely on marketing at least one cash crop might see joint marketing or the promotion of improved cultivation and postharvest handling practices as an effective way to achieve a competitive edge. The benefits of collective action among small-scale farmers are highest in contexts where delivery volumes and schedules are a concern, and where established quality characteristics exist for marketed produce. Benefits are less obvious in undifferentiated markets and where informal marketing channels dominate.

Types of Capital Investment[4]

Most African governments simultaneously pursue two parallel approaches to agricultural and rural development, each of which is based on different types of capital investment. One approach fosters well-capitalized individual and/or corporate investment in individual farms, corporate plantations, estate farms with associated out-grower programs and agricultural processing

[4] This section draws on J. Bingen and J. Rouse, 2002, Sub-regional Workshop on Agricultural Development and Empowerment of African Farmers: Perspectives and Policy Recommendations. In Workshop Report FAO-ICA. Sub-regional Workshop on Agricultural Development and Empowerment of African Farmers: Perspectives and Policy Recommendations. Nairobi, Kenya, March 13-15, 2002 (Rome: FAO and ICA). And J. Bingen, 2002 (updated 2004), Producer Groups: Becoming Full Partners in Agricultural Markets and Agro-Enterprises. In Daniele Giovannucci (ed.), Guide to Developing Agricultural Markets and Agro-enterprises (Washington, D.C.: The World Bank).

facilities. These larger scale private and corporate investments may generate important foreign exchange earnings, and they may provide significant off-farm employment or marketing opportunities for farmers with small operations. This development pathway takes a variety of forms and constitutes an especially important part of government agricultural development strategies throughout the continent.

Despite the potential contribution of a large-scale commercialization approach to agricultural domestic product, and sometimes to its foreign exchange earnings, by definition and intent it tends to benefit well-capitalized, large-scale commercial farmers and does not reach or offers fewer benefits for small-scale or marginalized farmers, especially those living in remote or not easily accessible regions. To address this imbalance, governments also encourage projects supported by international assistance agencies, nonprofit organizations and private investors that specifically seek to serve the production and marketing needs of smaller, poorer and more geographically isolated farmers. A central issue involves how to improve the effectiveness of this small-farmer-oriented approach. The latter approach can be classified into three types of investment interventions on the basis of the predominant type and means of capital invested by the firm or agency, each reflecting different tendencies in smallholder organization and forms of RAS provisioning. In considering specific cases, the typology reflects a continuum, rather than fixed set of discrete categories.

The first type, which we label a *contract/financial* intervention, focuses on an investment of financial capital that is designed to realize a profit for a firm in addition to earnings for growers. In the case of cooperatives, these are synonymous. This kind of intervention, one variant of the large-scale commercial approach, commonly includes commodity-focused out-grower or other types of cash crop production and marketing promotion programs and is usually financed by private sector buyers of high-value agricultural products. Another characteristic of this type of investment is that they are often organized around a central, fixed-asset, value-addition processing facility -- e.g., cotton gin. The same dynamic is observed in smallholder cooperatives organized around coffee washing stations, milk chilling units, cereal grading and storage depots, etc. Regardless of scale, the financial viability of these operations serves as the inducement for investing in RAS that support the smallholder producers who supply the raw materials.

In addition to the smallholder-based cotton and cocoa production schemes in western Africa,[5] the coffee, dairy and tobacco production in central and eastern Africa, and others, the Smallholder Tea Authority (STA) in Malawi illustrates the extension and development issues raised by farmer organizations created through this type of investment (Chirwa et al., 2005). Established in the 1990s as a parastatal, STA provided almost 5,000 smallholders with free seedlings for plantation establishment, free extension, tea and maize inputs on credit, and the collection of harvested tea. Following a series of organizational and financial difficulties, in 2002

---

[5] For Mali, see R.J. Bingen, 1998, Cotton, Democracy and Development in Mali. The Journal of Modern African Studies 36: 265-285. ; also Tove Degnbol,1999, State Bureaucracies under Pressure. A Study of the Interaction between Four Extension Agencies and Cotton-Producing Farmers in the Sikasson Region, Mali. International Development Studies, Rlskilde University, Denmark. For Burkina Faso, see B.M. Dowd-Uribe, "A paradox of liberalization. Understanding persistent state power in the Burkinabè cotton sector." African Studies Association 54th Annual Meeting, Washington, D.C., Nov. 17, 2011.

the STA was dissolved and the Smallholder Tea Growers Trust (STGT) was established. Through the STGT, farmers receive a range of support and marketing services, and some have created their own tea production and marketing associations.

The examples of smallholder coffee and dairy cooperatives offer some of the clearest examples of smallholder organizations directly responding to members' extension needs. Unlike external private investors that, by design, provide extension services to producers from the outset, cooperatives or similar formally organized farmer organizations tend to evolve into the role of offering technical services to their members as their functions expand and mature. The end result, however, is similar in extension functions to other private sector investments, if less robust in quality and depth in backstopping of the technical services offered. Extension services offered use a mix of group-based and face-to-face contacts with members, influenced by the commodity and technical issue.

The second type of investment, a *project/technology-based* activity, focuses on the introduction or promotion of a new or improved technology or set of practices. Such investments constitute the bulk of agricultural development interventions and are typically mediated by various types of governmental initiatives, donor-funded projects and nonprofit organizations. Investments of this type, with exceptions (e.g., cooperatives and producer associations, noted above), tend not to be organized around central capital-intensive production or processing activities, and focus less attention on internal, group capacity-building themes (e.g., organizational governance, enterprise management and advocacy skills). These investments also tend to exist in contexts at the cusp of formal market development, involving nascent, albeit often critical, smallholder market relations (e.g., Simpson, 2012).

The "soybean clusters" in Ghana illustrate this type of investment (Nederlof et al., 2011). Starting in 2006, this five-year program, "From thousands to millions project," supported by the International Fertilizer Development Center, was designed to improve agricultural productivity and economic growth in Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Togo. The goal has been to improve access to profitable markets by establishing agribusiness innovation platforms or "clusters," by improving access to inputs and services, and through negotiation and lobbying. Using a value-chain approach, two nonprofit organizations helped farmers build the capacity to work collectively, including their involvement in negotiations for bulk purchasing of inputs and sales. "Capacity building on working together as a cluster remains crucial to sustaining the concept in the intervention area. … When farmers are organized, other actors are more confident to work with them because they envisage lower transaction costs and improved business security when dealing with a group rather than with individuals" (Nederlof, el al., 2011: 85). The reduction in transaction costs or their transfer from external buyers and service providers to farmer organizations is one of the key benefits offered by such groups in the marketplace.

In addition to use of traditional extension approaches, one of the trends in RAS provisioning in this type of investment is the use of some variant of a volunteer farmer-to-farmer extension approach. Use of this approach is especially prominent within projects implemented by nonprofit organizations, although some governments, such as Malawi, are formally promoting the approach as well (Franzel et al., 2014; Kundlande et al., 2014; Tsafack et al., 2014; Simpson et al., 2012).

The third type of activity, a *process/social capital investment***,** concentrates on the development of social capital, including support for collective self-help capacity building. In some countries, organizations taking this approach are frequently invited to collaborate with and thereby complement the contract/financial investment activities undertaken by private firms or other groups.

The work by the Cooperative League of the USA (CLUSA) best illustrates this approach.[6] CLUSA carries out its mission of promoting "sustainable economic growth and entrepreneurial solutions … by strengthening economic participation and governance and increasing market access through cooperative enterprises and other member-owned, democratically controlled organizations." Their approach includes providing functional literacy and numeracy education as an integral component in cooperative management training and institutionalizing the cooperative development capability of member groups. Illustrations of their work include the Rural Group program in Angola, which seeks to increase food security and incomes of smallholders; the Mali Agricultural Production Initiative, which seeks "to foster sustainable, environmentally sound economic growth"; the Mozambique Rural Group Enterprise Development program, which seeks to "consolidate and strengthen producer organization and marketing capacity, improve farm productivity and crop diversification, and enhance farmer capacity to influence the agricultural policy environment"; and the Uganda Agricultural Productivity Enhancement Program, which aims "to create new, and strengthen existing, producer organizations."

Similarly, in Rwanda, a United Kingdom Department for International Development-supported program to enhance the adoption of relevant agricultural technologies for cassava, potato and maize production focuses on strengthening social networks and farmer organizations as a basis for strengthening the collaborative relationships among farmers and farmer cooperatives, researchers and extension personnel (Nederlof et al., 2011).

The core skills needed by smallholder groups to organize, identify, implement and manage joint remunerative activities have been formalized by Catholic Relief Services into a series of training modules.[7] The five skill sets are: organizing democratically for collective decision making; managing savings and lending to protect key assets, smooth consumption and encourage investment; selecting, establishing and growing an enterprise; managing natural resources for sustainable agricultural production; and managing knowledge to innovate and maintain competitiveness in a changing market.[8] Group formation and development demand a more intimate extension engagement model, involving regular face-to-face contact, a clear exit strategy based on group performance competencies, and provisions to assist groups as their needs mature and evolve.

In each of the three investment types, when RAS are provided to a group, whether by a principal investor or through the group's own initiative to meet members' technical needs, the costs of

---

[6] See www.ncba.coop/cooperative-development-program.

[7] Supported through the Modernizing Extension and Advisory Services project, USAID.

[8] See www/meas-extension.org/public/meas-offers/training/five-skills.

service delivery are commonly built into the market or management fees that members pay. In other words, they are hidden from view and not optional. When spread across the full membership in relation to their derived benefits, service costs have proven to be acceptable, but all those involved must pay if the services are to be maintained. Less commonly, groups directly pay for specific types of member training or services. In these cases, payment for training appears to be more acceptable than paying for technical advice. Experiments conducted by the World Bank and others in explicit user fee-for-service approaches to RAS have generally failed once external matching funds are removed or the major share of financial burden shifts to producer groups. Cooperatives' use of explicit fee-for-service extension shows a similar trend, with low subscription rates among members opting for fee-based advisory services. The exception involves services for high-value assets -- i.e., veterinary services for livestock -- for which there is a ready, well-established parallel in human health services, and a heavy unitary penalty for non-action (e.g., loss of livestock).

Summary observations. All of the above approaches to smallholder-oriented interventions encourage -- in fact require -- some form of collective action or organization by farmers as a precondition for individuals receiving benefit. In turn, the type, source, and terms and conditions of the investment capital provided have a direct impact on the viability or sustainability of the farmers' collective activities. Different types of investments shape or add to the assets of farmer organizations in different ways, and affect their membership dynamics and the capacity of farmers to generate, accumulate and reinvest capital collectively (see Table 1).

The type of capital investment and the organizational culture that it generates has an impact on the capacities of farmer groups to access agricultural goods and services and to create opportunities for wielding political and negotiating power. To illustrate: smallholder farmers who depend on private firms or even nonprofit organizations for access to goods and services are more vulnerable (i.e., subject to uncertain supplies) than those who have developed a more independent capability for seeking solutions to their problems. Generally, if care is not taken by external actors, and if external organizations insert themselves into critical roles in group functioning or the group's relationship with others, vulnerabilities are created along with opportunities.

The capability of farmers to hold private firms, nonprofit organizations and government agencies accountable for delivering agreed-upon services is also directly influenced by the type of investment and how this shapes farmer relationships with external actors and agencies. Interestingly, contract/financial types of investment perhaps offer small-scale farmers the best prospects to emerge into positions of influence over agricultural and rural development policy. In these cases, the profit-driven nature of the investment and the inherent dependency on smallholder productivity provide the conditions for farmers to recognize, express and act on their collective interests.

Table 1. Investment Type and Impact on Farmer Organization Assets.

Type and focus of investment	Assets of farmer organizations				
	Membership	**Financial**	**Human/problem solving**	**Leadership**	**Social/networking**
Contract/ financial (usually private companies, parastatals and sometimes cooperatives)	Defined by the company or economic partner	Unimportant for the company; assumes that smallholders recognize their own self-interests	Capacity developed and learning valued only as they relate to specific production and marketing issues for a particular commodity	Outside hierarchical (top-down) control with little or no internalized organizational structure	Based on each individual's involvement and tends to be commodity- and contract-focused; social capital development not a priority and may occur as a result of other types of investments
Project/ technology (usually donor-funded by nonprofit organizations)	Self-selection; defined largely as a means for accessing technology or a service	Usually some type of cost sharing linked to access to technology or service, but most resources come from outside	Limited capacity for problem solving; tends to be a continuing role for outside mediators, leading to dependency	Directed from outside and generally not community-managed; organizational structure is not internalized	Voluntary; tends to be mediated by an agency or program outside the community; local social relationships usually are not challenged
Process/ social (may include some types of savings and credit groups, and some types of self-help groups)	Tends to be open and based on a value attributed to some type of collective action	Accumulation of internal resources and promotion of financial self-reliance commonly an integral part of group formation	Learning encouraged, though often implicit in nature -- derived from a need to deal with a broader set of actors and opportunities	Community-managed within an organizational structure (often copied from outside) that is internalized	Based on diverse, expanding and group-oriented activities; open-ended, multiple organizational structures (formal or informal) encouraged; local social relationships may change in response to new opportunities

Implications for Small-scale Farmer Empowerment and RAS Development Strategies

Various categories of farmers respond to the different types of investment opportunities differently, largely on the basis of their perceptions of and ability to act on the benefits offered at specific points in time. More highly capitalized farmers and/or those with regular, outside sources of income and savings, such as retired civil servants, may be attracted to different types of projects on the basis of their assessment of the opportunities for protecting and enhancing their relatively high levels of fixed and liquid assets, and thereby improving their productive capacity. This class of farmers fits the concept of the modern economic actor. These farmers recognize and act on furthering their own economic self-interest. They find that deeply respected and still important sociocultural institutions in their lives, such as the extended family, are fundamentally inadequate, even serving as sources of liability that can thwart the accumulation and reinvestment of capital generated through the establishment of discrete, contractually based or market-like relationships.

On the other hand, farmers with lower levels of capitalization, who continue to depend on family labor and/or recurrently cannot meet their household food needs, commonly fashion their livelihood strategies around familial and community (communal) institutions that are grounded on principles of trust and reciprocity. In fact, they tend to rely on their community institutions – rather than more contractual or market-type relationships – to govern their economic relationships. The depth of established behaviors can make shifting from community/familial relations to those more contractual in nature a difficult and emotionally charged experience.

Given the high level of risk and uncertainty in their production operations, farmers with low levels of financial and physical assets commonly welcome the opportunity to participate in multiple market-oriented group activities, structured around the social capital of their community institutions, to improve their livelihoods. Because this is the class of farmers that is most likely to confront difficulties in meeting short-term production credit obligations, their membership in these groups can jeopardize the long-term viability of collective activities and projects and weaken the local capacity for collective accumulation of working capital.[9] The importance of credit availability is well noted by some organizations, such as the Uganda Cooperative Alliance, which pairs support to production/marketing with saving and credit cooperatives, and the case of CLUSA/Mali (Box 1) and the five skill-set training modules discussed above.

Over time, different classes of farmers will seek different benefits from collective action opportunities. How they see their involvement in collective action may differ significantly from the viewpoint of those who promote or offer (e.g., donors and nonprofit organizations) these opportunities, including the provisioning of extension and advisory services. For some farmers, the sociocultural importance of participating in group activities may at one point be as important as or more important than any economic motivation. As individual and household socioeconomic conditions change, both wealthier and poorer small farmers may decide to move into or out of collective activities or local organizations. This type of dynamic suggests that not only does group

[9] It is equally important to understand different livelihood strategies that are gender-based as well as those based on different relationships to resources -- e.g., between agriculturists and pastoralists.

membership become a fluid concept, but that the distribution of benefits from collective action will vary over time and, with it, the group's interest and ability to deliver RAS functions to members.

The diversity of livelihood strategies at the village level, the different bases for these strategies, and the various types of formal and informal arrangements among farmers and households give rise to a wide range of organizational types and forms. This suggests that the success of agricultural and rural development interventions that seek to work through or create farmer organizations will depend on how well they respond to and build upon this diversity. The continuing lack of attention from private firms, nonprofit organizations and government agencies (or development agencies) to this socioeconomic diversity and the need for more differentiated intervention approaches to address this diversity have led, at best, to considerable inefficiencies in development programs and projects and, at worst, to a further deepening of rural poverty through dissipated energies and capital and loss of confidence in collective action.

Finally, different classes of farmers can be expected – and should be encouraged – to act politically in different ways. More highly capitalized farmers and, especially, retired civil servants have relatively little difficulty in understanding how collective action can be used to improve their access to agricultural goods and services, to provide opportunities to hold government and other external partners accountable and responsive, and to influence policy. This well-to-do class of farmers recognizes their self-interest, and they identify themselves as citizens in a political sense. Peasant farmers, on the other hand, tend to have a low level of political identity and efficacy, and little time for or inclination to become involved with institutions beyond the village, including making demands on extension services. Their political marginalization and their experiences over the years with various governmental, nonprofit and private sector projects reinforce this ambivalence. Consequently, the challenge for external actors involves determining how to help these small-scale farmers become full partners and citizens in the development process.

Participatory development rhetoric aside, there is a stark paucity of positive examples among mainstream development efforts in which smallholder farmers have controlled the development agenda. Where large-scale efforts have been made, successive levels of aggregation, often culminating in a final decision-making body or "platform," with one or two farmer representatives speaking on behalf of groups with whom they have little knowledge and no contact, can result in prioritizations that bear little resemblance to the interests of individual groups and group members. A former director general of a national research institute facilitating innovation platforms observed, "Farmer representatives represent only their own interests." Demand articulation, when filtering of local interests, whether aggregated or not, against national and/or donor priorities can serve to further obscure the emergence of true locally driven agendas. These dynamics suggest that demand-driven programming requires group autonomy in decentralized decision making, accompanied by accountability structures backed by the possibility of real sanctions -- conditions that few development organizations and governments have the confidence to accept. Key attributes in the relation between investment types and the impact on farmer empowerment regarding demand-driven RAS are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Type of Investment and its Impact on Farmer Empowerment in Demand-driven RAS (self-reliance, access, accountability and policy influence).

Focus and type of investment	**Self-reliance**	**Provisioning of/access to agricultural goods and services**	**Incentives for accountability and responsiveness**	**Opportunities to influence agricultural and rural development policy**
Contract/ financial	Would prefer dependency with no side-selling; independent organizational capacity can be viewed as a liability	Defined by the company "bottom line;" company-supplied, or supply- or profit-driven (can include support to nontarget crops to ensure production of those targeted)	Tends to be through various types of formally organized management committees; little attention to class differentiation among producers; challenges tend to be expressed through organized protests against prices and costs	Through management committees, but issues tend to be limited to specific commodities or products that are part of the company's investment program
Project/ technology	Mixed, with tendency toward outsider financing and the filling of key roles leading to dependencies; few examples of enduring local capacities	Defined by the project; some mix of supply- and demand-driven; few examples of enduring capacities to meet RAS needs	Usually an assumption of shared interests in a community; presumption that participatory approaches assure accountability and responsiveness	Usually not specifically on the agenda; but when on the agenda, they tend to be mediated by outside agencies, especially the donor and nonprofits' agenda
Process/ social	The achievement of sustainability and self-reliance of the self-help group is an end, not a means	Tends to be demand-driven in terms of member-identified benefits	Can be demanded but may benefit some groups of producers over others, especially the more vocal and assertive	Can be demanded but may speak to interests of some groups of producers over others; negotiating power may be weak in the absence of internal capacities and/or enabling environment; often also dependant on an outspoken leader

RAS in the Context of Administrative and Regulatory Reforms

Historically, three overlapping reform processes have influenced the institutional and operational context of opportunities for extension and advisory services to work with producer groups in sub-Saharan Africa:

- The agricultural sector policy reforms that date from the structural adjustment programs launched during the 1980s and early 1990s, as well as the World Bank-sponsored poverty reduction strategies, all gave attention to the provision of services through smallholder organizations as a means of reducing burdens to the state.
- Various types of decentralization initiatives, a cycle of which also began during the 1980s, sought to "deconcentrate" and localize services to improve responsiveness to and efficiency in serving local needs. (A new wave of decentralization is currently unfolding in many African countries.) These initiatives were joined by a growing number of donor-supported, community-based development programs through the 1990s specifically designed to allow local populations to participate in development planning and management. The success of state-sponsored efforts tended to be tied to the level of discretionary decision-making authority and resources made available. In contrast to broader sectoral reforms, donor agencies tended to finance and set the conditions for more limited time-bound, targeted projects. Those projects implemented by for-profit and nonprofit organizations have left startlingly little in enduring impact, largely through their lack of engagement with governmental institutions and forethought about how the initiatives would be sustained.
- The third set of reforms are those being promoted as part of "new extensionist" strategies designed around the "demands from clients and markets, local conditions, constraints and opportunities" (Sulaiman and Davis, 2012: 7). One strand of these programs attempting to create more demand-oriented agricultural services is the effort to turn public technical advisory services into private services, to empower smallholders to access private extension services and market information (on a fee basis) and to develop private sector delivery capacity. As with the second set of reforms, donor agencies largely finance and drive this set of initiatives.

The recent and continuing adoption of various models of decentralization clearly offers new opportunities for rural people to participate in local economic and social development planning, including decisions over the structure and content of extension and advisory services. In the absence, however, of mechanisms to invite and enforce local-level public accountability, and without the authority to negotiate the operating conditions for various types of rural and agricultural investments within their jurisdictions, many of the local units of government being established represent decentralization without roots. And in the worst cases, they lack the funds necessary to take action.

The new measures for decentralization rarely address the ways in which accountability mechanisms and enabling conditions can be improved. Without this, decentralized government may simply provide another opportunity for local elites to reinforce their power, particularly in the absence of any countervailing power of smallholder farmer organizations.

Several other administrative and procedural elements may further compromise local development efforts involving farmer organizations:

- Overlapping, separated and sometimes competing responsibilities among government ministries at the local level frequently jeopardize the formulation of coherent and responsive local development programs. The existence of multiple donor-funded initiatives can create or exacerbate the fractured nature of responsibilities in field-level actions.
- Local governmental and administrative offices confront serious budgetary and technical constraints. Seriously restrictive budgets preclude easy and frequent contact with the local population, and the absence of even the most basic infrastructure (electricity, roads, etc.) creates tremendous barriers to undertaking the simplest activities. Government officers assigned to rural areas have often spent many years at their posts and, as a result, hold an immeasurable wealth of local information but have virtually no influence within their services. Their geographic, budgetary and technical isolation from the center frequently compromises their ability to help farmers forge the kind of development partnerships needed for them to break out of poverty.
- Centralized financial control procedures, most of which date from the colonial era, seriously impede local governmental efforts to mobilize capital and effect autonomous decision-making. Similar restrictions on credit and banking discourage the mobilization of local and private financial capital for development. Thus, all too often public and private rural financial institutions and governmental financial regulations fail to provide a foundation for the creative and productive use of local capital.
- In the absence of local and nonlocal contract enforcement or the legal registration of contracts, the economic environment for investment continues to be as risky for investors and farmers as it was before the era of structural adjustment reforms. In fact, it might be argued that rural investors face as much uncertainty today as they did during an earlier era when they feared the nationalization of their assets.

For farmer organizations to realize the full potential of market opportunities requires changes in the legal and regulatory framework that directly affect the right to organize and to advocate; the creation of new financial, banking and credit opportunities; and local governmental authority for investment.

Lessons for Farmer Organization Development and RAS

Several programmatic recommendations arise from our assessment of farmer organizations and RAS:

- Functional barriers to farmer organization development must be correctly identified and addressed, be it the lack of broad-based literacy skills, legal registration hurdles, or absent or limited access to capital, among many others. Failure to do so will meet with limited success in efforts to organize farmers, and more likely result in outright failure in achieving enduring impact.
- Groups themselves, as well as their needs, evolve. External actors must consider how to meet future, more advanced needs, as well as the replenishment basic skills and ability

to meet the needs of new groups. Evidence does not support the assumption that, once formed and functioning, groups will independently meet all of their future requirements.

- For organizations supporting market-oriented RAS efforts, the market for which farmers are producing and a viable business model for accessing this market must be understood, as well as the group's relation to others within the value chain. It cannot be assumed that producer groups already understand their opportunities and the form and functioning of their selected value chains, or can be taught this in the abstract. Higher level consideration also needs to be given to market scale, so that the promise of initial pilot efforts does not lead to overproduction and price collapse.

- For groups that are already formed, understanding their nature and history is critical in working with them to develop new activities. Farmer groups are not uniform, one-dimensional entities, and treating them as such trivializes their integrity and invariably results in mismatches between outsiders' expectations and group members' interests and needs.

- Linked with the above, establishing and maintaining group autonomy to define and pursue the group's own development goals is critical. Group survival in many ways depends on establishing and preserving a clear understanding of why the group formed and achieving measurable success in meeting members' individual and joint objectives. For the sake of expediency in reaching short-term project targets, development interventions in which intermediaries insert their objectives and functionally occupy critical roles can create a situation in which groups begin serving outsiders' interests and will likely fail to fill the operational gaps when external assistance is removed.

- In demand-driven interventions, where groups are invited to provide critical input or assume control over setting the development agenda, establishing and preserving clear lines of accountability is essential. Labelling as "demand-driven" those interventions in which farmer organization inputs ultimately have little impact on prioritization, or in which they are effectively used to validate external interests, is not only disingenuous but unlikely to lead to enduring contributions by the organizations in shaping outcomes.

- In the context where groups themselves must ensure their own RAS needs to achieve their market-oriented goals and remain viable, experience shows that this is best achieved where activities are visibly profitable, and where the costs of RAS can be appropriately blended with other essential services of group functioning. The scaling of cost sharing, based on the level of individual usage of group services, is also key.

- The growing trend of merging farmer organization development efforts with farmer-to-farmer service provisioning requires careful consideration. To date, the approach has been most used in technology promotion efforts in which external entities determine what is promoted, rather than in demand-responsive programming. Identifying and designing efforts that respond to the motivations of volunteer lead farmers, as well as establishing enduring linkages with receptive external partners capable of providing new information and materials, are elements that must be addressed by sponsoring organizations to ensure sustainability of such efforts.

- Outside of instances where development gains can be secured through targeting farmers as individuals, group action is essential. In working with groups, RAS initiatives must prepare for the time and skills needed for group-based approaches to take hold and prosper. Seemingly obvious, this rule is violated in more instances than not.

Concluding Observations

A letter from a Uganda activist in the December 2012 issue of *Farming Matters* offers an important caution: "The successes of the coordinated action of farmer organizations are overwhelming…. However, I wonder if national governments provide enough institutional and political space for farmer organizations. … Strong grass-roots organizations and mobilization processes pose a formidable political risk for most governments; it is therefore not surprising that many organizations of small farmers have remained weak. Market cooperatives often only fit with well–to–do farmers; I don't really think that the success of marketing cooperatives really means that farmers are empowered. In most cases these cooperatives keep small-scale farms in the background, forced to work under oppressive market relationships."[10]

At the same time, it is important to note that the National Coordination of Peasant Organizations (CNOP), Mali, was awarded an honorable mention for the Food Sovereignty Prize by the U.S. Food Sovereignty Alliance in August 2013. As the award noted: "CNOP was the prime contractor for the development of Mali's first agricultural policy… in September, 2006, [making] Mali one of the first countries to put the principle of food sovereignty into law. In February 2007, the CNOP hosted *Nyeleni*, the first global forum on food sovereignty … and has led the hard fight against land grabbing and for the rights of small farmers."[11]

[10] See *Farming Matters*, December 2012, No. 4.
[11] See http://foodsovereigntyprize.org/the-honorees/.

References

Belloncle, G. 1979. Jeunes Ruraux du Sahel: Une experience de formation de jeune alphabetizes au Mali. Paris: Editions l'Harmattan.

Bingen, R.J. 2003. The Upper Niger River Valley Union and Associated Farmers' Enterprises (UGOA): A case study of a farmer cooperative alliance for agricultural input supply in Mali. Unpublished. East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Dept. of Resource Development.

Bingen, R.J. 2002 (updated 2004). Producer Groups: Becoming Full Partners in Agricultural Markets and Agro-Enterprises. In.Daniele Giovannucci (ed.), Guide to Developing Agricultural Markets and Agro-enterprises. Washington, D.C.: The World Bank.

Bingen, R.J. 1998. Cotton, Democracy and Development in Mali. The Journal of Modern African Studies 36: 265-285.

Bingen, R.J. 1994. La Structure et les Dynamiques des Associations Villageoises de l'OHVN. Ouvrage collectif sous la direction de R. James Bingen. East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Dept. of Resource Development.

Bingen, J., and J. Rouse. 2002. Workshop Report FAO-ICA. Sub-regional Workshop on Agricultural Development and Empowerment of African Farmers: Perspectives and Policy Recommendations. Nairobi, Kenya, March 13-15, 2002. Rome: FAO and ICA.

Bingen, R.J., and B.M. Simpson. 1997. Technology Transfer, Agricultural Development and Democracy in West Africa: Challenges and Opportunities in Mali. In Y.S. Lee (ed.), Technology Transfer and Public Policy. Westport, Conn: Quorum Books.

Bingen, R.J., B.M. Simpson and A. Berthé. 1994. Analysis of the Service Delivery Systems to Farmers and Village Associations in the Office de la Haute Vallée du Niger, Mali. East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Dept. of Resource Development.

Chirwa, E., A. Dorward, R. Kachule, I. Kumwenda, J. Kydd, N. Poole, C. Poulton and M. Stockbridge. 2005. Walking Tightropes: Supporting Farmer Organisations for Market Access. In Walking Tightropes: Supporting Farmer Organisations for Market Access, Natural Resource Perspectives. London, U.K.: Overseas Development Institute.

Collion, M.-H., and P. Rondot. 1998. Partnerships between Agricultural Services Institutions and Producers' Organizations: Myth or Reality? London, U.K.: Overseas Development Institute.

Cook, M.L., and M.J. Burress. 2009. A Cooperative Life Cycle Framework. Unpublished manuscript. Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri Dept. of Agricultural Economics.

Degnbol, T. 1999. State Bureaucracies under Pressure -- A Study of the Interaction between Four Extension Agencies and Cotton-Producting Farmers in the Sikasson Region, Mali. International Development Studies, Rlskilde University, Denmark.

Dowd-Uribe, B.M. 2011. A Paradox of Liberalization. Understanding persistent state power in the Burkinabè cotton sector. African Studies Association 54th Annual Meeting, Washington, D.C., Nov. 17, 2011.

Dumont, B. 1973. Functional Literacy in Mali: Training for Development. Education Studies and Documents No.10. Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Franzel, S., J. Sinja and B.M. Simpson. 2014. Farmer-to-Farmer Extension in Kenya: The perspectives of organizations using the approach. World Agroforestry Center Working Paper 181. Nairobi, Kenya: World Agroforestry Center.

Kundlande, G., S. Franzel, B.M. Simpson and E. Gausi. 2014. Farmer-to-Farmer Extension in Malawi: A survey of organizations. World Agroforestry Working Paper 183. Nairobi, Kenya: World Agroforestry Center.

Nederlof, S., M. Wongtschowski and F. van der Lee. 2011. Putting Heads Together. Agricultural Innovation Platforms in Practice. Amsterdam, The Netherlands: KIT Publishers.

Oakley, P. 1990. Rural Organizations and People's Participation: A Review of a Decade's Progress for Cooperatives and Rural Workers Organizations. Reading, U.K.: University of Reading Agricultural Extension and Rural Development Department.

Simpson, B.M. 2012. Beginnings of a Grain Revolution – A Senegalese experience with EAS private-public partnership in cereal value-chain development. Modernizing Extension and Advisory Services (MEAS) Case Study No.1. Washington, D.C.: USAID.

Simpson, B.M. 2001. Institutional Issues: Case studies of Ghana and Mali. Annex B10, in FAO (2001) Mid-Term Review of the Global IPM Facility. Rome: FAO.

Simpson, B.M., G. Heinrich and G. Malindi. 2012. Strengthening Pluralistic Agriculture Extension in Malawi. Champaign-Urbana, Ill: University of Illinois,.

Simpson, B.M., and E. Dembélé. 2007. Assessment of Mali Cotton Producer Associations. IFDC/USAID West Africa Cotton Improvement Program (WACIP). East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University.

Sulaiman, R., and K. Davis. 2012. The "New Extensionist": Roles, Strategies, and Capacities to Strengthen Extension and Advisory Services. Lindau, Switzerland: Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services.

Tsafack, S., A. Degrande, S. Franzel and B. Simpson. 2014. Farmer-to-Farmer Extension in Cameroon: A survey of extension organizations. World Agroforestry Center Working Paper 182. Nairobi, Kenya: World Agroforestry Center.